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# HISTORICAL SKETCH

OF

# GREENE TOWNSHIP,

HAMILTON COUNTY, OHIO,

DELIVERED BY

C. REEMELIN,

BEFORE THE

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CHANGED.

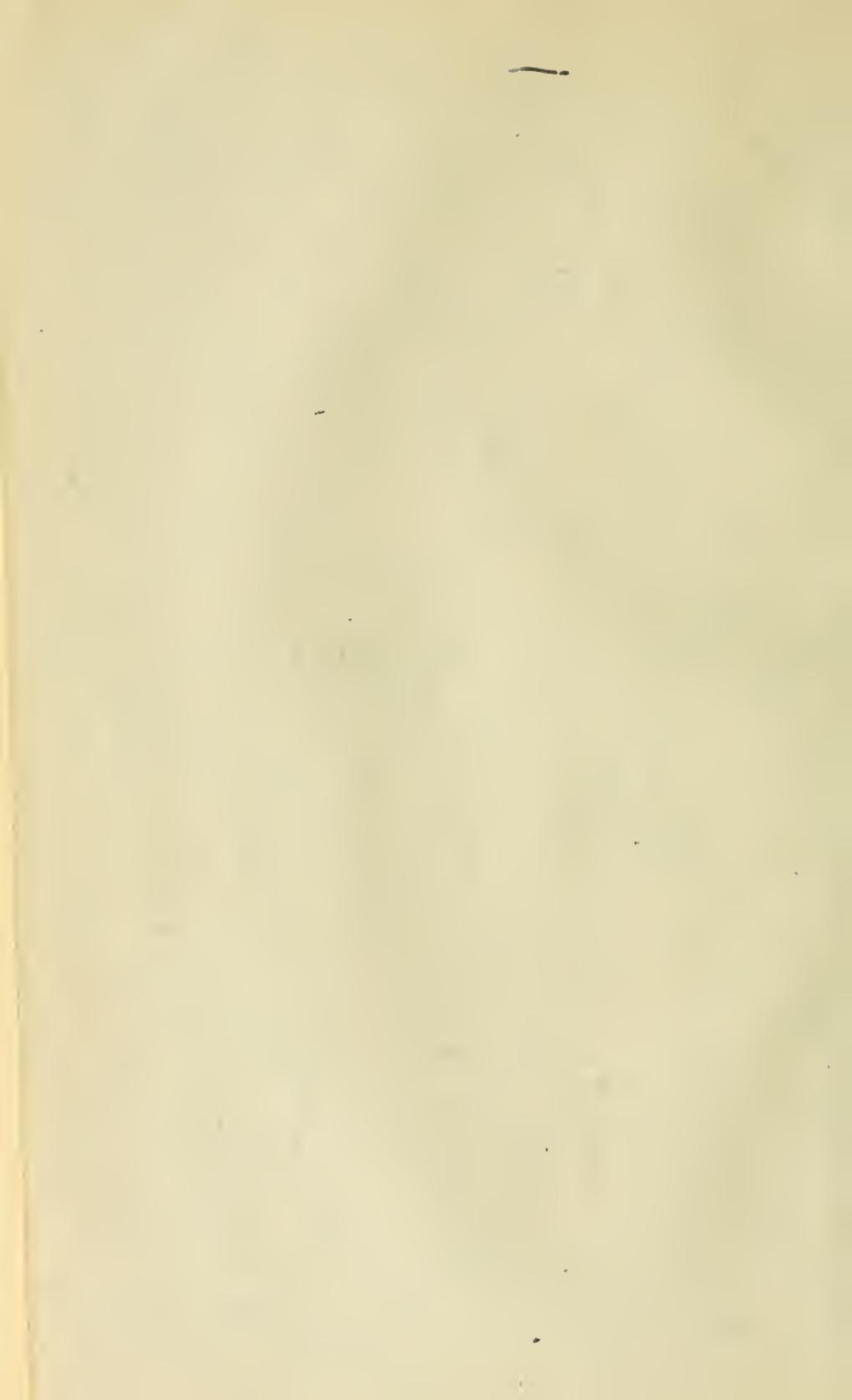
# TWENTY-THIRD ANNUAL FESTIVAL

OF THE

Greene Township Harvest Home Association.

AUGUST 31, 1882.

CINCINNATI:  
ROBERT CLARKE & CO.  
1882.



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## HISTORICAL SKETCH.

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*Ladies and Gentlemen, Neighbors and Friends:*

My remarks are limited in time and matter. They are not to take over an hour, and I am not to repeat what the Hon. *Alexander Long* has already said upon the history of this township at the annual festival in 1869; and yet I am to present a connected total of the more interesting historical data. The selection is difficult, because I can neither add to nor take away any thing from our history; and furthermore for the reason that there is a wide difference of opinion as to what should be mentioned and what omitted. Most folks have advised me to tell you nothing except what flatters you, whilst I conceived my task to be to try before all to comprehend myself the history of this township, and then to present my conclusions to you, so that all of us may be the better participants in our free institutions. And natural conditions deserve our first consideration; for nature is the beginning of all things, though it has not itself a beginning.

### NATURAL CAUSES.

The official historians of the country's nature are the State geologists, and they have reported to us in volume 1, page 422, as the proper beginning for reasoning on this township as follows:

"Strictly speaking there are no hills in Hamilton county, the surface being all referable to the table lands and the valleys worn in them. What are called the Cincinnati hills, for example, are merely the isolated remnants of the old plateau, which have so far escaped the long-continued denudation. Indeed the high lands of the county are all of them outliers or insulated masses, surrounded on every side by the valleys of existing rivers, along deep

excavations wrought out by these streams, under somewhat different geographical conditions."

The popular mind rejects this geological theory, that would spirit away from us the most solid thing we have—our hills; for we are constantly reminded that it is an up-hill business to come here, and what is more, that the hills are growing steeper and the valleys deeper, which again causes the waterflow to be more rapid, and often more dangerous to those below us. And it pains us to think that the grand old plateau that once existed from the Ohio to the lakes, if not from way south to way north, is now gone forever. But why long for a vanished past when our thoughts should be directed to feasible plans against further losses and injuries?

I would not overrate the capacity of man to counteract nature, but neither should we underrate our abilities in this respect, when we have not only examples in the remote past, when the power of man over natural forces was much less than now, but also in our own time, when ravages, such as molest us, were, if not stopped entirely, at least much diminished.

Have you ever thought what Solomon meant by his advice in chapter v, verses 15 and 16 of his Proverbs, when he said :

"Drink water out of thine own cistern and running water out of thine own well."

"Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad and rivers of waters in the streets."

Constructions other than what the words plainly mean have been put upon these words. With the help of Luther's translation, I think that they are simply an injunction to retain and utilize the rainfall and the springs for human benefit, and to prevent, or least check, injuries from inundations. The products of a country can be multiplied as well as increased four fold by irrigation; droughts can be mitigated; inundations almost prevented, and the health of a country much improved by dams here and outlets there, and corresponding drainage. Northern Italy has done it for the waters flowing from the Alps. Louis

Napoleon has performed similar work by what is called "the rectification of the Rhone." Our task is a small matter as compared to these works, and yet it is too big for individual efforts, unless they are facilitated by public administration duly empowered by law. If you will but reflect on this, it will, beside turning your mind to a very necessary work, also awaken in you the perception how little so far we have understood in this township to do things needful in the right way by the co-operation of public administration and private enterprise.

The retention of a part of our rainfall and its use for household, gardening and water-power purposes is, in my opinion, for the future of this township a very vital question. We have some cisterns and a few lakelets, but should have thousands more.

Stripping our surface, amounting to 23,040 acres, of its forests of hickory, walnut, oak, beach, maple, ash, elm, sycamore, ironwood, locust, dogwood, wild cherry and buckeye trees has not only caused more sudden flows of the rain, but it has deprived us of firewood, building timber and shady groves for pleasure grounds.

We may be unable to compute in money the loss this township has sustained by the waste of about 21,000 acres in forest, equal to 1,500,000 cords of wood, or 180,000,000 of cubic feet of lumber; but no one can doubt that *intrinsically* this area is worth less now than it was eighty years ago. We have indeed a money wealth of \$3,000,000—the duplicate makes it but \$2,148,298—to show for it. Count the wood cut off only at \$3 per cord, and it alone would make \$4,500,000. The fertility washed away could not be restored for \$3,000,000. Nevertheless it remains true that these matters raise questions which are very difficult to solve. Each person would argue it from his standpoint. The pioneers would say: "For us the woods were an impediment, and every acre cleared a source of wealth." Forestry science would answer: "True, but you cleared a little too much, and government should have protected future generations against your waste." And you will probably say to me: "Why bring up a thing that can't be

helped?" To which I reply: It is to let you know that *it can be helped*, and that the way to do it is to plant trees soon and perseveringly. I think, too, that most of you know what trees to plant and where to plant them. Those of us who do not, must go to persons scientifically and technically educated as to tree-planting, and learn the best methods and kinds. But as in nearly every thing else, so is it in this. Individual action does not suffice; we must have public organization, clothed with public authority, to prompt the slaggard and to repress and punish the evildoer, and to aid the feeble. Why should not this township own at least 1,000 acres of woods in public grounds? If private persons have the right to withhold or withdraw lands from cultivation for immediate use, why not organized society, that acts from much higher and more sagacious motives?

#### TOPOGRAPHICAL SPECULATIONS.

The State geologists say in the volume and on the page already quoted from:

"There are two natural ways of ingress to Cincinnati by low land, or in other words, there are but two railroad routes possible, one by the Ohio, and the other by Millcreek Valley."

You will of course cry out: "But we have a railroad," and some prophet will rise and say: "We shall have two." Yea, some one will claim that two street railroads are feasible, one on the Harrison pike, and the other from Terry's Hill, through Warsaw, to Bridgetown. Those wiser still will study the history of our roads and point out to us that if we want to be, beside a good place to retire to, also a convenient locality for the world's commerce, for travel and recreation, we must have a public system for the general improvement of *all* our roads, from the mud roads to the macadamized, the turnpike, and especially our Westwood railroad. And why? Because the center of population, that was eighty years ago in the United States 800 miles east of us, is now but three miles south of us. We have, so to speak, been taken in. There are populations on all

sides of us in populous cities, one of them a large metropolis. We are being rapidly surrounded, and could not, if we would, be by ourselves any longer. The poet says:

"Act well your part, there all the honor lies."

Our part is to make ourselves acceptable. Every young lady present knows that rule. It is an old story. The pioneers knew it. They run their first road from the Ohio to Findlay's mill, and thence to Cheviot; then from North Bend to where the Seven-Mile House now stands, and where there was formerly an excellent distillery for general convenience. Then they started from Millcreek and Walker's mill, through Cheviot, towards Mianitown, the forerunner of the Harrison turnpike. And finally they joined in a road near Cumminsville, to what is now Jacobsville, all tending, by natural ways, about towards the place where we are now assembled. No wonder then, dear friends, that the social, the convivial and the political followed suit, as we all attest by our presence here to-day.

#### THE INDIANS.

The life of the Indian was barren; he had no economy, either public or private. He was innocent of the glory that was inherent in the country, but he was also innocent of any devastation. He was also innocent of waste. He was the only barren thing in a teeming world. That which to us was new was old to him. He loitered, where we are on the run; and of the enhancement of human existence through public organisms, which is the lever of civilization, but also the danger of freedom, he knew almost nothing, and cared less. The fear of subjugation kept him free, but also miserable.

The country now within the United States is capable, as statisticians calculate, of maintaining a population of 500,000,000. Of Indians there were never in it more than 500,000. This township now keeps easy 500 families. On the basis of Indian life it would hardly keep one. No Indian village, family, or even hermit, ever resided in this locality. There was an Indian village about six miles

northwest of here, and from it a few came here occasionally to hunt, as the flint arrow heads, found in our fields, prove.

According to Indian traditions "coon skins, honey and possum fat" constituted the chief attraction of our hills, and they were innate here, whilst wolves, bears, deer and foxes came here, much like most of us, as wanderers and exiles. An Englishman, whose rotundity told his love of ease, remarked hereon, that he "believed it, because no animals except those that loved to climb or could fly would ever be indigenous to this township." Let us accept the accusation which this implies, to wit, that bees and birds, the representatives of industry and peace, are our emblems. Better be a Tusculum for the seekers of health and quietness than an Alexandria which the greedy covet and the brutal of mankind fight over.

#### OUR INDIAN NAME.

Little, as I have said, did the Indian bring here; little did he add or change or carry away; but he invented for our part of southwestern Ohio what those who named this township have not been able to do, viz: a name from the configuration of the country, and we may as well now rescue it from oblivion. I heard of it in this way:

Forty years ago, after purchasing a piece of land in this township, I employed the two sons of *Johnson*, one of the first settlers and tavern-keepers of Cheviot, to build me a post and rail fence, that being, as I was told by a pioneer, "the best way to keep the peace in a new country, where free pasturage of cattle was of more importance than the rights of man." The Johnsons were familiar with the Indian traditions, and as anxious to tell them as I was desirous to hear them. They had indeed become somewhat Indianized themselves, including the love of whisky.

They told me that the Indians on coming up here from the Big Miami saw in Taylor's creek and its branches the figure of an open left hand stretched eastward, and therefore called this region "*Kuliga*," "*Kuli*" standing for pretty, and "*ga*" for hand, the entire name meaning "pretty hand." With a little imagination this figure is

easily traceable upon the ridges of our western slopes, and so believing recorded it in my diary. A facetious bystander, a Kentuckian, remarked, "that the open hand is a proper designation for this township, as its people were ever more ready to take than to give." But when it was pointed out to him that the hand meant one stretched towards Greene township, and that his analogy did not fit, he trotted off on the horse, he had come to trade, without further reply.

You are all aware that the present name of our township, Greene, was given in honor of the Revolutionary general of that name. One "e" has been dropped in common use, and the intended tribute to public virtue rather lost for a color that fits neither our past nor present vegetation. The first was in its forest dress, like Joseph's coat, "many colored," especially in the fall, and the second is for those that have seen the Emerald Isle, rather gray than green.

Why, any way, attach names of men to towns? Why imitate the appellations of other places? Why not use names that express lasting landmarks? Mount Airy and Dent, villages in this township, are such designations, and so was Kuli-ga, our Indian name. Of the general cognomen, "township," and its real import, "fenceship," we will speak further along.

#### THE FRUSTRATED FRENCH SUPREMACY.

I presume you all know that up to 1745 no one disputed French supremacy over this county, so far as it lay west of the Alleghanies. In consequence of the wars between England and France British attention became fixed on the French possessions in North America, and in 1763, in pursuance to the Treaty of Paris, Great Britain became sole owner of all of North America that was not held by Spain. The defeat of the French in this matter has been deemed a sort of preliminary liberation of this country, and we of the West, especially we inhabitants of the area between the two Miamis, are told, that we owe gratitude to Anglo-Saxonism for this victory.

I can not see it quite in that light, because reflection convinces me that our farming and gardening, as well as our modes of living, have not developed as well under specific English order as they would have done if there had been a little more constant admixture of French ways.

*De Tocqueville*, himself a Frenchman, does indeed admit a preference for English colonization, because under it "the colonies have always enjoyed more internal freedom and more political independence than those of other nations." This admission does credit to French liberality, but it proves lack of full knowledge. The truth is, that England was least fair to the Indians and more rigid in the assertion and maintenance of royal sovereignty than most other monarchies, Spain perhaps alone excepted. The list of grievances in our Declaration of Independence proves this conclusively.

*Carlyle* contends, that the question was "whether this part of creation should belong to the good canonier (the French) or the good plougher (English)." This is a double misconception. The French are not the better canoniers, nor the English the better ploughers. Had he compared their respective wood-chopping capacities he might have made out a greater dexterity for the English.

*Volney* thought that the issue was, "whether the minds of the future Americans should be kept contracted or allowed to expand." He wrote this in 1806, when French revolutionary ideas were believed to be the liberating causes for all mankind, and when England was regarded as the bulwark of the pernicious royal and aristocratic tendencies of past ages.

*Franklin* objected, in 1754, at Albany (where he was as the delegate of Pennsylvania for the purpose of uniting all North America under one Government) to further French occupation of our West, "because they were stealing the affections of the Indians; would incite them to incursions into the eastern provinces; hindered the English from having more land, which was equivalent to a diminution of population, since the human species multiplied in pro-

portion to the lands open to them." He added: "This hindrance is tantamount to killing thousands of children before they are born." You can see very plainly that Franklin had no fears as to over-population; such as Malthus scared the world with fifty-eight years afterward.

The French answered: "The Indians love us, because we understand how to affiliate with them. They invade the eastern English provinces because they want to get back what's their own." And, as to land: "You now have more than you want and know how to take care of properly." To Franklin's land plan (a mixed settlement and arrangement between English gentry and British farmers and laborers) they replied: "Come freely among us as settlers, and we will be liberal in our terms; but if you come armed and with your gentry, you will be stopped, and get nothing but *free withdrawal*." Had Franklin's land plan been adopted, and even this township, among the rest, would have had a society, mixed of English noblemen and workingmen, plaguing the life out of each other.

In 1754, there were one and one-fourth millions of inhabitants east of the mountains, of whom about one-fifth were English, Scotch, and Irish; three-fifths native Americans, and the remaining fifth mixed of Germans, French, Hollanders, and negroes. The Moravians had settlements both in the East and the West, *Count Zinzendorf* having inspired them with the true method for interhabitation with the Indians in peace. Franklin himself mentioned the fact that "Debtors, the common English, the German bond-servants, and negro slaves escaped from the eastern provinces." May we ask, Why?

Do you not, then, agree with me that the worst thing that could have happened to this western region, our township included, would have been, that *one Europeanism* should have succeeded in suppressing all other Europeanisms? Would not that have prevented the establishment of the true American cosmopolitanism? The freedom from socially obstructive Europeanisms is our glory. And our progress is always measured by our capacity to keep down or to wear out prejudices, idiosyncrasies, and man-

nerisms, which the old world will not, and the new world should not, tolerate.

#### THE JEALOUSIES OF FRANCE AND ENGLAND ABOUT AMERICA.

The maternal relations of two parent states to colonies, in which they are rivals, are much akin to those of two mothers-in-law as to the couple, made up of their son and daughter-in-law respectively. The mothers are jealous of each other, keen for the recognition of their authority, and unctuously pressing in their affections.

On the other hand, the couple, whose filial obediences are claimed, are chary of their responses, punctilious about their independence, and tenacious in taking their own course. An incident that occurred in the earlier days of the settlement of Delhi township illustrates this observation. A descendant from German parents had married the daughter of an English family, both mothers-in-law being alive, and anxious for the couple's welfare. The mothers importuned for the ways of living of their respective homes and annoyed the couple more than they did them good. Finally, the latter declared that they would take the counsels of both into serious consideration, and take whatever they thought good, but decline that which appeared inappropriate. They became the model family of the neighborhood, and enjoyed more of the good things of this life than both mothers had ever enjoyed.

America was in trouble in a similar way between 1740-70 as to England and France, and came out finally in like manner, by an impartial judgment between both.

In 1745, *La Corne*, who deemed himself called upon to be the special advocate of French pretensions, and who is described as "a recklessly sanguinary partisan," wrote, with a view to deter English immigration :

" From the Canada Lakes beyond the Alleghanies all is desert, mere hunting ground for the Six Nations, dotted here and there an English trading house or adventurous squatter farm. The French have stockades, castles at military points, and fortified places in Louisiana itself, and

are very skillful with the Indians. The English have no establishments of any solidity in these parts."

That the French did not believe in this story of a desert (the usual one as to unknown countries), we know from the fact that the French governor, *La Gallisonniere*, was alarmed at a new appearance in the political sky of America, viz., attempts at colonization on their own account by the colonists on the Atlantic, especially that of the Ohio Land Company, undertaken with the sanction of the Governor of Virginia by Washington and his brothers, in 1749. He sent out a vigilant commandant with 300 men, and orders: "to trace and occupy the valleys of the Ohio and of the St. Lawrence as far as Detroit; to bury *plates of lead* up and down the country, with inscriptions signifying that from the furthest ridge, whence water trickled towards the Ohio river, the country belonged to France. And to also nail *Bourbon lilies* to the forest trees, and to forbid the Indians to trade with the English, but to expel the English traders from the towns of the Miamies."

Whether any of the French soldiers came into this township, and found any English traders here can be neither affirmed nor denied. Most likely there were some squatters here, such as La Corne speaks of. Of the plates of lead or the Bourbon lilies there is no knowledge, not even a tradition. But the expedition had one, to us, very important effect. It checked the extension of the authority of the eastern provinces over the lands north of the Ohio. Our special region was thus saved all the litigation and disputes caused by the Virginia Land System, which embarrassed the Scioto valley and Kentucky. It prevented probably also, that we, too, become the "bloody ground" in more senses than that of fights with the Indians. Had Virginia and Pennsylvania, as well as other States, succeeded in perfecting their land policies, Ohio would have been parceled out to several states, and their respective jealousies would have divided our society seriously. They did it much more than they should have done. Our township was, from causes to be hereafter stated, perhaps

freer from them than other portions of our part of the State.

The French movements aroused Pitt in England, and he ordered, 1753, the British governors in America : "Stand on your defense over there. Repel by force any foreign encroachments on British dominions!" But where were these British dominions west of the Alleghanies? By treaty of Utrecht, 1713, and Aix-la-Chapelle, 1748, England had acquiesced in the title of France to all of North America, exactly as Governor Gallisonniere had defined it in the order which we have just quoted. There was a dormant American title, that of the future people of America. It, Franklin expressed at Albany, thus :

"Both the French and English now know that the great territory beyond the Appalachian mountains, on both sides of the Ohio, and between that river and the lakes, is one of the best of North America. The soil is rich and fertile, the atmosphere healthy, the climate mild; chase, fish, and game exist in abundance, and there are great facilities for commerce with the Indians; and the lakes and great rivers open for hundreds of miles to internal trade most advantageous water-ways.

"Thus favored by nature, the territory will, without doubt, perhaps before a hundred years, be a rich, populous, and important possession, and be, either for France or England, a great addition to power."

It must, in justice to Franklin, be stated, that these words were addressed to the British governor in New York, who had called the conference at Albany for the ostensible purpose of forming a union of the North American British Provinces, an object very dear to Franklin; for he wanted the creation of some general authority over the narrow-minded, land-hungry, colonial governments; so as to inaugurate his sagacious national policy. Bear in mind that Franklin was then the postmaster-general of the British Provinces, the first and only national officer ever appointed by the British authorities. It is considerably doubted, whether he run a mail into this township.

## THE REACTION.

When Franklin saw both his union and land plans shelved, in consequence of the narrow views of the British ministry and the provincial egotisms, he saw more than ever the necessity of a policy that would free North America from the trans as well as *cis*-Atlantic impediments to the concordant development of the future American people.

The conduct of the war that followed brought to his mind further enlightenment, and he saw clearer, why the Indians took kindly to the French and the Moravians, while they were bitterly hostile to the English and Anglo-Americans, and he changed his tone in his publications accordingly, and it influenced the public mind. The best he wrote on the subject was his essay, "Remarks concerning the Savages of North America."

When, subsequently, England, after the peace of 1763, simply pocketed Canada, it was a unity of North America not at all to his liking, because it was a mere union under the British crown, whilst the several provinces remained separate, and there would therefore be a chance for the British cabinet to play them off upon each other by encouraging their rivalries. To his mind now, the territory acquired was not crown or provincial land, but soil free to the men who came to till it and to live upon it. He was glad to see the barriers broken down between the East and the West, and that there were more in and outlets for commerce than the Mississippi and the St. Lawrence. Indeed, he never was a friend of the public policy, so much acted on by the French, that rivers and their facilities are the only points in a country's development; he knew, as postmaster-general, the immense importance of land communications.

When, between 1777 and '83, he resided, as American minister, in Paris, and France became our ally in our struggle for independence from England, he became more than ever alive to the benefits open to America by French and other European accessions, which, he knew then,

would be much diminished if English supremacy and exclusiveness prevailed.

#### THE ROYAL LAND POLICY.

I presume that, without me telling it, you have found out already, that much of the love of country professed for America is a love of land. The politics of England toward the North American colonies were always in the main a land policy. Hence the first step, after the treaty of Paris in April, 1763, which transferred our West temporarily to Great Britain, was a cabinet order, issued October 1, 1763, forbidding all land purchases from the Indians by individuals, companies, churches, and bodies politic, and ordaining that all purchases must be made by and for the crown. This measure carried with it the English *absolutism* as to the rights of property, and this most fatal heirloom England afterward left to America. It starts with the fiction that the lands all belong to the supreme power of the country, that the rights of property granted by it are absolute rights vested in the grantee or possessor. These rights of present owners are a denial of the authority of the state to have a true land and real estate policy for all time to come, in which the future rights and interests of society are the main criterion. The same impediment now perplexes Gladstone as to Irish land laws. Its fountain head are false ideas of sovereignty. Thus North America became not only a crown land but a royal domain. We may see its wickedness toward us by the fact that the United States Congress, when drafting the ordinance of 1787, felt called upon to abrogate a part of it by special rules as to inheritances, wills, and conveyances, so that real estate may be conveyed by lease and release, or bargain or sale.

The legal fiction that the lands of a country, which a European power is colonizing, are the domain of the sovereign or sovereignty of the so-called mother country was left untouched. The Indians were not, as was the pretense, protected against individual aggressions, because these were, notwithstanding, committed by many persons

under special grants to favorites. Nor was a wise land policy founded upon it, in which the Indian pretensions, as well as the schemes of the land speculators, would have been reduced to a minimum, and the rights of the good, actual settler made the true basis. The main wrong was thus continued to the United States.

#### THE AMERICAN LAND SYSTEMS.

The authorities of the several British colonies that became States after the achievement of American independence had, before the revolution, endeavored covertly to slip in their own sovereignty for that of the king, and had claimed that the sovereignty over the "back country" could be acquired by them by the occupation of their citizens under grants from them. The Ohio Land Company of the Washington brothers, in 1749, was such an endeavor. Pennsylvania was also crowding up to and across the Ohio, and so was Connecticut overleaping New York and working up a title to what is now our Western Reserve. The Herrnhuters and Moravians had acquired rights in themselves by direct dealings with the Indians. And the ordinance of 1787 exempts, in the section quoted, "the Kaskaskias, St. Vincent, and neighboring villages" from the general law, because they "professed themselves citizens of Virginia," and therefore were entitled to have "saved their laws and customs relative to the descent and conveyance of property." This, our region of Ohio, remained unaffected by these special colonial (state) movements, because no one had settled here, up to 1800, under colonial or state grants. The treaties at Fort Stanwix, October 27, 1784, and at Fort McIntosh, January 21, 1785, were meant to extinguish all Indian title in Ohio, and to make it absolute in the United States; but the real extermination of it was Mad Anthony's victory in 1794. This part of our history looks queer, if we read with it this clause of the ordinance of 1787: "The land and property of the Indians shall never be taken from them without their consent, and in their property, rights, and liberty they never shall be invaded or disturbed, unless in just and

lawful wars authorized by Congress." This means that statesmen shall write humanities into the laws, but that the men of the sword shall interpret and construe them. Thus the provisions of the ordinance "for preventing wrongs being done to the Indians, and for preserving peace and friendship with them," were never carried out.

#### THE SEQUEL OF THIS POLICY.

It is ever to be regarded as a misfortune that the higher characters of the United States could not well get the public lands of the country out of the clutches of the states without asserting a sovereignty for the United States that was, to speak mildly of it, a remitter to royal assumptions. The United States military acted, as we have seen, in the treaties at Fort Stanwix and Fort McIntosh, on the policy embodied in the royal order of October 1, 1763; but the declaration of Washington, in one of his first messages, 1789, "that it was the law of the United States," secured its general public acquiescence, though there had been no corresponding legalization by Congress. Thus became a British cabinet order the law of the land here.

On it rest to-day, and have rested for a hundred years, the land purchases and removals of the Indians, and all the land grants and sales, the formation of new states, townships, etc., with the arbitrary rectangular system of surveys. The rectangles and squares have all proved unsuited to our rural development, to our so-much-needed communal unity, and to our economic husbandry. We have, by public and private action, modified the original surveys and mapping, and are still at work to make our grounds more natural in their contour, and more suitable to our social and political necessities.

The United States surveyor of our township was the famous Israel Ludlow; the geographer, Thomas Hutchinson, a branch of whose family still resides in this township. Why there was at all a geographer, what he noted, platted, and reported, we could not learn. The United States officials in Washington replied to our inquiries that there is no report on file in Washington. Such an officer

would have been extremely useful in a good land policy for making reservations for public grounds, forests, etc.

#### THE SYMMES PURCHASE.

This transaction, entered into October 25, 1788, for the details of which I must refer you to Mr. Long's excellent and accurate recital, was the product of the juridical premises, upon which Congress dealt with the lands of the country. They rested on ambiguous conceptions as to the rights and duties of the Government, the Indian, and the purchaser. The policy based thereon has been a failure both in its good public intentions as well as in the personal purposes which it was to observe. Symmes died far from being rich. The 208,540 acres conveyed to him out of the million acres sold to him and his partners at sixty-two and one-half cents an acre have all passed from him and his heirs. Instead of drawing settlers on the lands, it repelled many and misled others. The 103,142 acres reserved for church, school, and college purposes have in the main missed their object, and our township is actually in want of land for public buildings, roads, groves, and to hold the elections. The school section was rented out on short-sighted terms for about forty years and denuded of timber, reduced in fertility, and marred in its natural beauty. About 1845, it was ordered to be sold, by popular vote, as the best way to conserve the land and to get a reliable revenue. The proceeds (\$53,000) were put into the State treasury at a perpetual interest of 6 per cent. The ministerial section is still, with the exception of fourteen acres, leased out on the old terms of twelve and one-half cents per acre. The college township, that should have given Hamilton county a broad basis for a university, is beyond its limits, in Butler county, and the lands are leased out at rates that bring in a ridiculous small income.

The outcome of these several reservations, especially the 1,280 acres in our school and ministerial sections, would seem to be a protest against *all* land reservations. That would, I think, be an error. There were parts of our township which should have been reserved for public

grounds, for township buildings, school lots, and commons. This community has paid for re-purchases of ground for public purposes over \$10,000, and yet it has no public places except school lots and roadsides. A republic with too little public property is as wrong in principle as one that has too much. A mere conglomerate of *rei privateæ* is not a *res publica*. It will cost this township more than the whole school section brought, to get the grounds, that will in a short time be found indispensable to the right conduct of our public business. I estimate that the cost of fuel and lumber now annually imported into this township is equal to four per cent interest on a million dollars.

When we reflect on this result of a public policy that went too far in creating and succoring private wealth, we cease to wonder at the "inarticulate yearnings," as Carlyle calls them, for the ancient communism in lands and wealth that are ever breaking out in modern society. And though we recoil from the radical changes which a return to it would cause; yet we must admit that some things must be purely public wealth, if we want to have a healthy public spirit.

The reservations in the "Symmes Purchase" proved so useless because they were placed under defective public administrations, and were not properly apportioned among the public wants.

#### AN AFTER-CLAP.

Symmes had agreed to reserve a full township of land opposite the mouth of the Licking for college purposes. But he delayed the assignment, and was allowed to do so by those in Washington who feared his influence as a former member of Congress. When about 1800 the Government demanded compliance, and claimed Millereek as this college township, it turned out that Symmes had sold portions of it already. They then asked for Springfield, but the same difficulty existed there, and thereupon he tendered Greene township. The United State Government sent out a committee, whether of Congressmen, officers, or citizens, I was unable to learn, to examine and

report. Mr. *Cist*, who claimed to have seen the report, though, on inquiry from me, it can not be found in the Interior Department in Washington, says: "That the committee advised the rejection of Greene township, because it was an undesirable locality, being too rough for farming, and too wild for the uses of civilized life." This official judgment on our township was long regarded as a severe reflection on it; and you, too, may, like many of the older pioneers, object to having it revived. But I think that if there is any reflection at all in this report it rests on those who made it; for every day shows more and more what a mistake they made. How much better would this township have been for a college than Oxford, in Butler county, where the intended seat of learning was finally located. But how much better it is, on the other hand, for us that this township was sold outright away from Symmes, than that we should now hold our lands on perpetual lease under some state board that would most likely be as blind about our best interests as they have been in reference to the management of a college or a university.

The Swiss now laugh at the old reports of Roman officers, made about 2,000 years ago, in which they lament over the worthlessness of Switzerland; why may we not smile at our United States officials who went about seventy years ago up Lickrun to the foot of the hill, on which our good pioneer, *Dater*, now has his fine residence and elegant grounds, fields, and vineyards, and then retreated with a slander on this township in their heads? They thought they had reached the end of the world; we know they were just at the beginning of beautiful landscapes.

#### THE ORGANIZATION OF THE TOWNSHIP.

I have searched in vain in the county commissioners' office, and in our township records, for the proceedings of the first organization of this township. It was unquestionably done, "according to law," and could not therefore have taken place before 1802; for the territorial law

authorizing the organization of townships passed January 18, 1802, that of the State a few months later.

The territorial government, under the Ordinance of 1787, consisted up to 1798 of a governor, a secretary, and three judges, all of whom had to be landholders; the governor 1,000 acres, the secretary and judges each 500 acres. The court of quarter sessions appointed constables and justices of the peace. This recalls the remark of Carlyle, that "American government began in anarchy plus the constable." But he forgot to tell us that the constable itself is an importation from France; for the British never like to acknowledge how much of their institutions is either imported or borrowed from abroad. It is just so with the organization of this township. The few people that lived here before 1802 were perfectly content with the territorial government that existed for eleven years from 1788 to 1799, because it was the nearest thing to no government at all, which was, as we know, their ideal Republic. They hardly welcomed the legislature that met in Cincinnati in 1799, and when the law passed for the organization of townships in 1802 it is more than likely that they did not act under it for several years.

The State law for the organization of townships provided that the *constable* should call the primary meeting; that he and a chairman, to be elected by the meeting, should keep order, and, if necessary, arrest and safely keep any and all disturbers of the meeting. It took fifteen male tax-payers to constitute a quorum.

When organized, the meeting was to elect by ballot:

Three or more trustees.

Two overseers of the poor.

Three fence viewers.

Two appraisers of houses.

One lister of personal property.

A sufficient number of supervisors of lands.

Please take a glance at this government for a few moments. It was really a disjunctive conjunction of six governments. And soon there was superadded a seventh, that of the trustees of sections sixteen and twenty-nine.

All not only independent of each other, but acting as far apart as if they were not of the same township. Our municipality was never an "*E pluribus Unum*;" for there was no union, but a septenary. It is now a duodecimfid, which is not a large multiple considering the disjointedness it started with.

Holding office was then a duty, not a right; for there was a fine of \$5.00 imposed on any one refusing an office to which he was elected. In the act of 1831 it was reduced to two dollars. It exists yet as to the trustees of the ministerial section. The idea of *duty* to hold office went under as offices grew more remunerative, and to-day even supervisor offices pay so largely that there is quite a competition for them. No fine has been collected since 1850.

Every adult male, not paying taxes otherwise, had to pay \$2.00 capitation tax. The charge for every bond servant was \$1.00; every horse, mule, or ass fifty cents; neat cattle twelve and one-half cents per head; every store \$10.00. Taverns were under county rule, and paid a graduated license.

Marriage was then lawful for males seventeen years of age, and females at fourteen. And yet the males did not become of age until twenty-one, and females until eighteen.

Of this township organization De Toqueville has said: "It is the foundation of American government; in it resides its sovereignty and democracy; it preceded the county, the State, the Union." And many have talked this ideality after him, and taken up this misconception of our institutions. It never was fully true of Massachusetts, and as to the other New England States it was always a misleading premise. As to the rest of the Union this local sovereignty doctrine has done infinite mischief, whilst as to us in this township the theory is contrary to the facts. The Union was complete in 1783, the Ordinance for our first public organism, a federal law, was passed in 1787; the State of Ohio was instituted in 1802; our township was formed about 1804; and the call for it

came from a constable appointed by a court of justice. Where is the sovereignty?

#### THE REAL IMPORT OF THIS ORGANIZATION.

It is a copy of the imperfect lower municipal organization called *Tithings* in England, as explained by Blackstone, vol. 1, page 114-116. Our law makers retained the older Saxon name "*Township*," preferring it to "*Tithing*," the more modern. They substituted for "ten freeholders," "fifteen taxpayers;" for the "titheingman," the "chairman;" but otherwise adhered to the original forms, including the judicial conception given by Blackstone, that, "wherever there is a constable there is a township."

It may be well to quote to you also the primary object of the English organization, viz: "to prevent rapines and disorders, and to bring together good men of family who dwelt together and were free securities and pledges for the good behavior of each other, and to keep the peace." This idea is still contained in our township 'Squires, whom the law calls Justices of the Peace. The principle is recognized also in the judgments given by courts against towns for property destroyed by mobs; otherwise it is much lost sight of.

Had Blackstone understood German, he would have known that the word "*Town*" is a corruption of the word *Zaun*—fence. The word Township is literally translated a *Fenceship*, and its legal significance is that there is a fenced-in locality wherein there are public guarantees for keeping the *peace*. The Germans have for this "fenced-in" or "hedged-in" precondition, created a more modern word—*Einfriedigung*—meaning, literally translated, Impeachment. In English, we have also adopted a new word from the Norman French, viz: *Precinct*, which, however, contains only the idea of something set off with special boundaries. Our township has now four election precincts. You can not fail to notice that we are and have been dropping the Township.

## THE DISORGANIZATION OF THE TOWNSHIP.

To charge upon our primary Township organization an ingrained inferiority would be as falacious as it was to attribute to it an inherent superiority. It may be doubted whether, with a people that gathered together as ours did, who had to undergo so many social changes, any institutions could have had permanency. Political frame-work follows social formations, where the development is normal. With us society was encased in a preordained public organism before itself was formed, and hence the true order of evolution proceeded under institutions which, like store clothes, did not fit. We started with English models and went to French and German (the latter as to schools). In other parts of America, they began with French or German or Swedish models and changed to English. It would seem, therefore, that there were in our social conformations disorganizing, as well as organizing causes at work, that were sure to change or modify any and all organisms imposed from ideal considerations. In other words, our unsettled society would have unsettled institutions. The tendency to separateness that came out in organizing Westwood and Mount Airy, had their antecedents in special detached school districts, for there too we have secessions from the general township administration and government. And I have often thought that it all arose out of the very spirit that brought this people into America. We seem to think that the only way to improve is to go apart. And whenever we want a new thing, we create a brand-new corporation or company or board—as for instance, when we started this annual Harvest Home Festival through an association. The French would have done it through the "*Commune*."

Altogether, it would seem that we have been too ready to admire and too hasty to condemn, and that we have about reached a social status when we must drift less and establish more. We must be prepared to debate and reflect on our public matters more as an organic society, and not to be afraid, if it be necessary to our best development,

to merge ourselves with other organisms. The township organization has disappeared in other localities—for instance, in Cincinnati. Why not in ours?

#### STILL WITHOUT A UNAL PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION.

From our old mud road system, with its compulsory road work for all male adults, we went to turnpikes with tollgates, the cost of construction to be half paid by the state and half by a company; but it was managed by the directors of the Harrison turnpike that the State paid two-thirds and the company one-third, the State getting, however, but half the stock and but one-third of the number of directors. The State put \$86,000 into it, and then sold its stock about twenty years afterward for about \$19,000. Would it not have been wiser to have given its stock to the townships or county than to sell it for almost nothing to a corporation; in fact, to one man? Next came the so-called free county roads, built on road-bonds that were to be repaid by tolls. Next, macadamized roads, with cost assessed on the adjacent land-holders; and lately we have gone back to the old mud roads, repaired by two days road work, supplemented by most exorbitant taxation.

Now we have all these road systems in operation at once —every man for himself and the — take the hindmost—plus our Westwood railroad, built part by donations, part stock subscription; and part on bonds. Nobody is satisfied with these disjunctive modes as a whole, nor with either of them. More or less arrogant injustice was and is being done in all of them, which I will not particularize, but must state the general result, namely: that proportionally speaking, the roads cost more and do less good to the public than any road system in the world. The same is true of our public schools. It would be improper to charge this defective public conduct on any portion of our society, and equally so to exempt any from the blame attached. The universal cause is, I think, to be found in our fidgety aversion to all unal public administration, which, under the circumstances, was perhaps so far inevitable. The time has come, however, when our society

must be held as no longer excusable, if it persists in the seperatistic public conduct that impedes our progress.

#### OUR PUBLIC CONDUCT THE REFLEX OF OUR SOCIETY.

It was pointed out to me a few days ago by our worthy fellow citizen Mr. Ross Fenton, whom I was consulting about certain data in our township history, that but two of the houses now remain that existed sixty years ago between his father's tavern, the Seven-mile House and the east line of the township; and the conversation brought to mind memories of other disappearances. Not merely our township organs have changed and been in part abolished, but the log cabins, barns, out-houses, and the very fences that made this a "fence-ship" have also had to undergo modifications and make way for things more suited to our new conditions. And so have ceased those innumerable other things that were so natural to pioneer life and look so unnatural to us—as for instance, the big fire-places or open chimneys, ever gaping for more wood, and the cooking and the sitting by open fires, with all the other worship of ever-burning fires. We no longer raise our own buckwheat—hardly our own food any way, nor that for our domestic animals. Hog raising for market has stopped as completely as making maple sugar and molasses and having beehives. The fuel for our households will soon be coal almost exclusively. In short, look where we will and we see new social and political developments. It was as nonsensical in us to be unjust to the new from a thoughtless admiration of the old, as to forget the glories of the old in wondering at the glitter of the new. Pioneer life had many charms and merits, as well as hardships and mistakes, but one thing it had not—lasting family endearments and neighborhood attachments. A speaker once said from this stand, that weeds were his most successful crop while he was a farmer, and a bystander remarked: "weeds are the only permanent out-growth in Greene township." And it did look so for some time, but the public eye is on them, and laws are being passed that will remedy this evil. I take from all this:

1. The lesson that when the people shall be more constant in their private economy, that of the authorities will also become more stable; and 2. That whenever reactions or reverses set in, there are also rebounds that give us new and better directions. Let us bring this fully to our mind by a few statistics as to our population.

#### OUR POPULATORY PROGRESS.

The census reports, that give the population of townships before 1850, have not been accessible to me. From the best information I could get, I find that the population of this township was under 400 in 1810; about 1,000 in 1820; about 2,000 in 1820, and about 3,000 in 1840. The census reports give it in 1850 at 3,948; in 1860, at 4,426; in 1870 at 4,356, and 1880 at 4,851. This would show that between—

- 1800 and 1810 the increase was.....500 per cent.
- 1810 and 1820 the increase was.... ....150 per cent.
- 1820 and 1830 the increase was.....100 per cent.
- 1830 and 1840 the increase was..... 50 per cent.
- 1840 and 1850 the increase was..... 30 per cent.
- 1850 and 1860 the increase was..... 15 per cent.
- 1860 and 1870 a falling off of..... 70 persons.
- 1870 and 1880 an increase of..... 12 per cent.

The progressive fall in the percentage leads us, when investigated, to two peculiar phenomena in our history, namely: that between 1830 and 1840, immigration into the township slackened, whilst emigration from it increased. Looking into the several valuations of land, and the returns of the products per acre, I found concurrent with the facts just stated, an ascent in the price of land, and a descent in fertility, which deterred, of course, new purchasers, and induced sales and departures. Take with these phenomena the other one, that with each generation born here, the attachments to birthplaces grow more inert, and patriotism for the whole country more intense, and we see one more effect produced by economic conduct, that runs up money values, and runs down production in the

lands. We see now the reason why the ratio of populatory increase diminished more and more. By 1870, however, and since, there has been a cessation in both currents, and we have been and are coming more and more into condition of self-development from within ourselves, with an assurance that our youth cling more to their mother country, or as we Germans call it, Fatherland.

I wish I had time to expatiate upon this point; for it leads to interesting data and deductions. I can only state a few more facts, namely, that one-fourth of our present population is foreign born; with their children, they are over half of the population. In the number of families, they are more than half. The census of 1850 mentions one negro; that of 1860, twenty-one; that of 1870, ninety-eight; for 1880, the census report I have does not give the number of colored persons.

As to wealth, this township was valued by Congress to be worth \$14,395.50. On the duplicate it stands now at \$2,148,000. I think it cheap at three million. Taking the latter amount as a basis, and it gives an average wealth for each man woman and child, of \$618; or for each family, \$3,750. This is below the average in the whole country, which is over \$700 for each person, and over \$4,200 for each family. That of our whole State is \$625 and \$3,900 respectively. The annual income for the whole population is estimated at \$400,000. I can not say on what data it is based. The average average for every man, woman, and child is  $4\frac{3}{8}$  acres; for every family, 21 acres.

#### THE EARLIER SETTLERS OF THE TOWNSHIP.

Let me now read to you the list of names of the actual settlers of this township, who came here before 1850.

[Mr. R. here read the list that follows at the end] and then continued:

These names bring more vividly, than any thing else would, the realities of pioneer life before us. To think them over, and to reflect on them, is, as I take it, both a pleasant as well as instructive exercise. The list is made from the real estate records of the county, omitting on pur-

pose all who were non-resident landholders. It takes, to my mind, more than a paper title to real estate to make a noteworthy pioneer. It will most likely need some corrections and additions. That there are none but landed proprietors on it arises from no invidious preference for this class of our citizens. On the contrary, it is regretted that the names of many meritorious factors in our development, such as mechanics, hired men, millers, distillers, teachers, doctors, preachers and artists, who never owned any real estate, could not be obtained by me in time.

A list of the hired girls, graduated by the length of time they served in any one family, so as to find by the same inquiry also the best wives, was also suggested to me. I had to tell the man who made it that hired girls are not yet an historic theme in this township. Our pioneers, both male and female, were largely their own hired help. The pioneer wives had "help" principally from neighbors if housework got into eventualities in which the joint work of husband and wife was not sufficient. Before 1820 there were no hired girls at all—the "old man" being the aid-de-camp of his "old woman." Even in 1833, hired girls were a luxury enjoyed by few.

But this and other subjects must be deferred. And now let me say generally that our archives and public books and papers are not well kept, and, what there are preserved, present very meager details. May I suggest that this Harvest Home Association of ours will see to it that this work is done. It would be a most praiseworthy extension of its unquestioned present utility.

In the list submitted are 395 names. All but two are males. We must, however, think of each of the males as the husband of a wife, and a good one, too. To my knowledge there is not a bachelor among the men on the list. The chief rights of the males were to be husbands, fathers and providers for their families, and to stand by the Commonwealth; those of the women, to be wives, mothers and the economic heads of families. More would have been regarded as surplusage; less as a defect.

And, now, before I give you some more "old news,"

allow me to tell you that, when any of you hereafter talk of the *fathers* and *mothers* of this good land, you ought to bear in mind that the list I have read to you proves, beyond the possibility of a doubt, that *they were an immigrated*, and *not* an indigenous, people. Paradise, or the origin of mankind, has never been placed here by any body. And if it ever were here, "unbeknownst" to history, there have been no survivors of the race started here then, nor even of the monkey, our Darwinian aboriginal predecessor. The old folks of this township are descendants of various progenitors, viz.: Yankees, New Yorkers, Jersey-men, Pennsylvanians, Virginians, North and South Carolinians, not to forget Kentuckians; and all have again, for immediate or remote ancestors, English, Scotch, Irish, French, Swiss, German, Hollanders and—well, it must be told—Africans.

So, if you must make some narrow social, political or religious mold, as to parentage, among us, you will please construct it wide enough to take us all in, and with a generous American allowance of room to spare.

#### NOTABLE MATTERS IN THE LIST.

The list comprises almost 400 persons, all landholders before 1850. Of these 30 are alive and 21 still live in this township; 16 are natives of this country, 18 are foreign-born; of these natives 6 were born in this township; of these foreign-born 12 came from Germany, 1 from Switzerland, 1 from France and 1 from Ireland. Among all these survivors there is, if my information is correct, but 1 widower.

I tried to ascertain the number of widows still living out of the 395 that were wives of the husbands given in the list; but found it impossible to get accurate data without journeys and inquiries, which I felt unable to undertake. I know of but 6, and all well provided for. There are doubtless a few more, but not over 12, which would go to show that the general rule of the greater longevity of widows, as compared to widowers, is true also of this township.

The list contains the names of two persons, *James W. Gazlay* and *Samuel Lewis*, that deserve special mention for their independence. The first voted as Congressman, with but three others against the special donations of land to Lafayette. He was ever after an unpopular man; being defeated at the next election (1824) by General Harrison. The second voted for years either singly or with a few others, in the teeth of the bystanding whips of both parties, the abolition ticket. Mr. Lewis was Ohio's first State Commissioner of our free schools, and he was all his life a promoter of education.

This township has furnished three members of Congress, viz: The aforementioned J. W. Gazlay, Alexander Long, and John A. Gurley.

It has had two members of the legislature to-wit: Robert Moore, afterwards judge of the court of common pleas and one of the first presidents of this Association; also your humble servant who served both in the lower house and in the senate, and became afterwards a member of the convention that framed our present State constitution. A grandson of one of the pioneers, Frederick Moore, is now judge of the court of common pleas. A son of one of them, Enoch Carson, was United States collector of revenue in Cincinnati. Another son of one of the pioneers, *Mr. Ross Fenton*, was county treasurer a few years ago. A native of this township, Mr. Chas. Miller, is treasurer elect.

Five on the list have been county commissioners—Isaac Jackson, Adam Moore, Wm. Benson, Ephraim Williams and John Patton. A son of one of the pioneers, Joseph Reardon, was commissioner two years ago.

Many of them held township offices; but as I could not give a full list, I thought it best to reserve this part of our township history to a future investigation. I may name, however, a few of those who held their offices for several consecutive terms, to-wit: Jonathan Markland, Henry L. Wilmer, Noble Vezey, John Miller, Samuel Beun, James Vanzant, as trustees; David E. Steathem as treasurer, and J. B. Reddish as township clerk. Wm. M. Orr must

not be forgotten as model assessor of real and personal property. He is the person that has known and remembers more persons in this township than any one else. I got many of my items from him.

Among the 395 on the list, there is no colored person. Indeed, it must be mentioned that the laws and the public disposition was, up to 1854, decidedly against "Americans of African descent." Very few were even employed as servants. Since 1850 there has been a reaction, and several families of that race have moved in, and some are also holders of real estate.

#### CONCLUSION.

With this, as I calculated, the hour allotted to my discourse has about run out, and I have presented the essential points of our township's history. I must leave some matters to my successors at other festivals. I am thankful to our Harvest Home Association for making me one of the laborers in a task which is so essential to us all, namely, the gathering up of historic data for permanent record. This association is the only undertaking in which our township exists as a united entirety, free from party, sect and race, or other division. It is founded in a natural, endlessly, from year to year, renewable event. I hope that it so understands its mission as to ever remember that it must finally be merged in the township. Then will apply to our work the poet's words:

"Men and things may fleet away in time,  
But the world lives on forever."



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